INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS - PROPOSAL

INTERNATIONAL STRAIT AUTHORITY

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Second Supplemental Update: The ISA Among the Competing Proposals

An Independent Analysis March 26, 2026
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THE FIELD

Twelve days after the original ISA proposal was filed, the international community has moved from no governance framework to multiple competing proposals. A UN peacekeeping mission is under discussion under Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026), seeking international supervision of the waterway. A draft resolution sponsored by Bahrain and supported by 135 member states authorizes "all necessary means" to repress obstruction of international navigation. The United States has drafted a 15-point ceasefire and management plan that includes provisions for "joint management of the strait under international oversight." France has assembled a coalition of approximately 35 countries for a post-conflict shipping resumption initiative. Iran has unilaterally implemented selective passage, granting access to non-hostile nations while barring U.S. and Israeli-linked vessels.

The field is crowded. None of the proposals currently in circulation existed in public discussion on March 14, 2026. All of them confirm what the original ISA document identified: the structural absence of permanent governance is now universally recognized as the problem requiring a solution.

THE COMMON OMISSION

Every framework currently under discussion manages the water. None addresses the shore.

The inland terrain of the Iranian coast — from which anti-ship missiles, mining operations, and fast-attack coordination can reach every point in the strait — remains outside the jurisdiction of every proposal on the table. UN peacekeeping forces on the water do not change the threat calculus from Iranian shore positions. Naval escort reopens the lane temporarily without altering the capability that closed it. The Safe Maritime Corridor evacuates stranded seafarers without resolving the condition that stranded them. Iranian selective passage formalizes coercive leverage rather than eliminating it.

The shore is the problem. The shore is unaddressed.

THE REGIME CHANGE COUNTERARGUMENT

The strongest objection to the ISA framework is that the shore problem is being directly addressed — through the objective of regime change. Remove the regime, the argument runs, and the successor government will not weaponize the strait. The governance framework becomes unnecessary because the political condition that generated the crisis is eliminated at its source.

This argument deserves a direct answer on its own terms.

First: regime change is not a governance framework. It is a precondition that may or may not be achieved, on a timeline that cannot be controlled, producing a successor government whose disposition cannot be guaranteed. Every day the strait remains closed while regime change is pursued as the primary objective is a day the world economy absorbs the cost of a structural absence that permanent governance would resolve.

Second: successor governments inherit geography. The inland terrain, the anti-ship missile infrastructure, the mining capability — these do not disappear with the regime. A cooperative successor government that controls the same geographic position retains the same latent capability. The government after the cooperative one may not be cooperative. The ISA addresses the geography permanently regardless of who governs Tehran.

Third: the ISA is not contingent on regime change but compatible with it. A cooperative successor government is more likely to accept ISA stakeholder status — with its associated revenue stream and international legitimacy — than a hostile one. If regime change occurs, the ISA becomes easier to establish. If regime change does not fully occur, the ISA provides the settlement architecture that makes a negotiated outcome viable without conceding the strategic position. The ISA does not oppose the military campaign. It answers the question the campaign cannot answer: what comes after?

Fourth: every prior instance of regime change in the region has produced successor instability that recreated the original threat in a different form. The ISA builds permanent governance into the geography rather than betting on the permanent disposition of whichever government follows.

THE ISA DISTINCTION

Among the current proposals, only the ISA framework addresses all four requirements of a durable settlement: permanent governance architecture rather than temporary management; inclusion of Iran as a stakeholder rather than a defeated party; direct engagement with the shore through the Qeshm Island territorial minimum; and a fee mechanism that gives all parties — including Iran — a financial interest in the strait's continued function.

The U.S. 15-point plan's "joint management under international oversight" is the closest existing framework to the ISA's governance tier. It lacks the geographic specificity, the stakeholder structure, and the territorial architecture that make permanent governance durable rather than nominal. Joint management of the water without jurisdiction over the shore is joint management of the symptom.

Iran's selective passage regime is, paradoxically, the most instructive development. It demonstrates that Iran already understands the strait as a governance instrument rather than merely a military one. The ISA formalizes that governance under multilateral authority rather than Iranian unilateral discretion. Iran receives revenue and legitimacy as a recognized stakeholder. The administered jurisdiction model provides

the legal off-ramp a successor government — or a chastened current one — can accept without appearing to capitulate.

The settlement architecture that ends this crisis permanently already exists. It was filed March 15, 2026. The field has confirmed the problem. The ISA remains the only proposal that resolves it.

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Original analysis filed March 14, 2026: https://archive.org/details/Proposal_Permanent_Governance_Strait-of-Hormuz
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